



State of Connecticut

SENATE DEMOCRATS
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

5199

Testimony of

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Labor and Public Employees Committee

H.B. 5199 AN ACT CONCERNING DISCRIMINATORY HIRING PRACTICES AND UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

Senator Prague, Representative Guglielmo, members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, thank you for allowing us to submit testimony today on H.B. 5199, An Act Concerning Discriminatory Hiring Practices and Unemployed Individuals.

Protection for the Unemployed

The federal Labor Department reports that 14 million people are unemployed and almost half of those individuals are classified as long-term unemployed, having been out of work for 27 weeks or more. The stigma that is attached to the unemployed has very real consequences for Connecticut's job-seekers. Some employers have taken advantage of the high jobless rate by discriminating against the unemployed, going as far as to include in job postings that the "unemployed need not apply." H.B. 5199 would prohibit such practices, thereby providing greater opportunities for the unemployed. We can strike a balance between giving the unemployed equal consideration in the job market and enabling employers to hire those individuals best suited to fill their positions.

Discriminatory advertising is essentially rejection from employment, regardless of merit. First and foremost, this bill should protect unemployed job-seekers from discriminatory advertising practices by employers, employment agencies, and labor organizations.

In addition, this bill would ensure that employers do not unnecessarily restrict their applicant pools. Discriminatory advertising excludes qualified candidates from being considered as a part of the applicant pool, hurting both job-seekers and potential employers. Without the initial opportunity to apply for employment and be considered for positions, how can we expect to get our unemployed citizens working again? By advertising that the "unemployed need not apply," countless job-seekers are deterred from even considering a position for which he or she may be very-well qualified. Connecticut's job-seekers must not be made to feel discouraged and disempowered in their search for meaningful work.

This bill would eliminate a barrier to gainful employment and help to create a fair and competitive job market. It would also allow employers to review all qualified applicants in a comprehensive pool, in order that the most talented candidates are offered employment.

Thank you for considering H.B. 5199. We urge you to support the elimination of employment advertising that discriminates against the unemployed.